



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Vicki Reynolds

714-560-7455

vicki.reynolds@sba.gov

Vision, Planning and SBA Loan Equals Success for J. Michael's

Victorville, CA – When Olivia Smith bought her business in 1998 she had a vision of what it could become. Her daughter was starting pre-school and she was restless. She and her husband Scott Smith, owner of Renaissance Wealth Management, were searching for investment property when the opportunity to purchase a hair salon was presented. She knew she enjoyed the spa experience and believed with her keen sense of marketing she could grow the business into something very different. Desert Community Bank suggested a U.S. Small Business Administration loan and the deal took off. Olivia felt she couldn't ask for a better process. Nancy DeCou, Senior Vice President and Senior Loan Officer stated, "It is always exciting for us to see businesses in the High Desert do well and expand. Olivia has become well known and is very involved in the community and her contacts have proven to grow her clientele base each month."

Olivia inherited 14 employees in the purchase. During her first year she investigated all aspects of the business, visiting trade shows and taking classes offered to shop owners. She also took classes offered by motivational speaker Anthony Robbins, joined Toastmasters and the Victorville Chamber of Commerce. Despite comments like 'this will never work' and 'that will be too expensive' she forged ahead with the belief that if she created a fun, happy environment with a strong commitment to personal growth for her staff and excellent customer service she could be successful. Today she employs 70. Her staff includes hair stylists, masseuses, nail technicians, aestheticians and botox specialists. She believes in "marketing outside the box" and has developed events such as "Gentlemen's Night" which couples salon services with martinis and cigars. Recently she launched J. Michael's Elegant Occasions, an event planning and catering business and she has other ideas in the works.

In 2002 DCB in concert with Enterprise Funding approved the construction and permanent financing of an 8,000 square foot hair salon and Olivia believes they will soon outgrow their current space. "J. Michael's Salon definitely found a niche that our area needs", said DeCou. "The salon is always full and with the growth we are experiencing in the Victor Valley it would not be a surprise if they did indeed outgrow their space sooner than any of us might have thought."

Desert Community Bank is a full service bank and a SBA Preferred lender. The SBA is a federal agency devoted to business formation and growth and SBA loans can be used for most small business needs. For

information about SBA's programs and services contact the Santa Ana District Office at (714) 550-7420 or visit their website at <http://www.sba.gov/ca/santa>.